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INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW GROUP

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August 15, 1980

ACTION
EA

The Honorable Edmund Muskie
Secretary of State
Department of State
Room 7229
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

It has come to our attention that the government of South Korea has refused to admit into the country either Amnesty International or the International Commission of Jurists and will not permit the International Commission of Jurists to send an observer to the trial of Kim Dae Jung. The circumstances surrounding this trial, in particular the prolonged secret detention of Mr. Kim and the intimidation and arrest of any defense attorneys of Mr. Kim's choosing, raise serious questions concerning the fairness and impartiality of the hearing.

In the early part of July, I had the opportunity to visit South Korea and to talk with several members of the South Korean bar, Korean missionaries associated with the Korean National Council of Churches and several American missionaries residing in South Korea. The clear message every person related was that the South Korean people feel that the American government has abandoned them, has allowed the seeds of democracy - planted by Americans - to be trodden by South Korea's own political and military leaders. This situation poses an obvious threat to military security.

It is of particular importance then at this time, for the U.S. to demonstrate openly and publicly within South Korean; its continued concern for the welfare and democratic ideals of the Korean people. A meaningful and appropriate way to accomplish this would be to evince deliberateness and care in the choosing of the American representative at Mr. Kim Dae Jung's trial. No one less than the American Ambassador in Seoul should attend the opening day of the trial; thereafter, a high ranking official should be sent to observe the trial proceedings.

The International Human Rights Law Group is Sponsored by The Procedural Aspects of International Law Institute.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CRC/MR
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These actions by the U.S. government would make such a clear statement - beyond the control of South Korean press censorship - that the Korean people would again be assured of U.S. concern and commitment to their enjoyment of freedom.

We respectfully urge you to convey our concerns to the government of South Korean over the treatment of the defense attorneys, in particular Mr. Park Se Kyung who represented Mr. Kim in 1976 and who has been detained since July 16. We also urge you to express our concern over the failure of the South Korean government to permit an observer from the International Commission of Jurists to attend the trial and we hope that the U.S. will see fit to send a high ranking official to represent the people of the U.S.

Sincerely,

Amy Young-Anaway

Amy Young-Anaway
Executive Director

AYA/arn
cc: Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
Roberts Owen, Legal Adviser